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Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 129145

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, MCAP, NO
SUBJECT: SECDEF LETTER TO NORWEGIAN DEFENSE MINISTER

PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE DURING MORNING OF
JULY 2, TO JOHAN KLEPPE, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, NORWAY,
FROM SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER. BEGIN MESSAGE.
AFTER YOUR DEPARTURE I REALIZED THAT WE HAD
CONCENTRATED OUR DISCUSSIONS ON LAND FORCES AND I
WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT WITH RESPECT TO NAVAL FORCES
WE WILL BE MAKING SOME CHANGES IN OUR NAVAL COMMITMENTS
IN OUR REPLY TO DPQ 73. THESE CHANGES DO NOT REPRESENT
ANY LESSENING OF OUR SUPPORT FOR NATO. FOR SEVERAL
YEARS THE US NAVAL MODERNIZATION PROGRAM HAS BEEN
IMPROVING THE CAPABILITIES OF NAVAL FORCES COMMITTED
TO NATO. HOWEVER, THIS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM HAS ALSO
RESULTED IN THE RETIREMENT OF MANY OLDER SHIPS FROM THE
ACTIVE FLEET IN ORDER TO MEET THE MODERNIZATION GOALS.
THEREFORE, WE FIND IT NECESSARY IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO
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REDUCE THE 252 SHIPS COMMITTED TO NATO BY TWENTY-

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SEVEN DESTROYER TYPES AND NINE DIESEL POWERED SUBMARINES.

THROUGH FUTURE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITIATIVE IMPROVEMENTS WE EXPECT MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN READINESS AND CAPABILITIES. FOR EXAMPLE: AS A RESULT OF OUR FLEET MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, THE PERCENTAGE OF SHIPS OVER 20 YEARS OLD HAS GRADUALLY BEEN REDUCED TO 35 PERCENT OF

THE ACTIVE FORCE AND CURRENT PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO REDUCE THIS FIGURE TO 25 PERCENT BY 1980. OUR PROGRAM HAS PROVIDED 152 NEW SHIPS WHICH HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE COMMISSIONED BETWEEN 1968 AND 1974.

WE SHALL INFORM THE DPC THIS WEEK OF OUR CONTEMPLATED CHANGES AND TO ASSIST NATO IN UNDERSTANDING THE FULL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NAVY PROGRAM, ADMIRAL ZUMWALT, US CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, WILL PROVIDE A DETAILED BRIEFING TO THE MILITARY COMMITTEE ON 6 JULY. YOU WILL THUS SOON BE RECEIVING THE FULL DETAILS OF OUR NAVY CHANGES.

BEST REGARDS. JAMES R. SCHLESINGER. END MESSAGE. ROGERS

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